

# VOTE FOR THE BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT

(Mr. EVERETT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. EVERETT. Mr. Speaker, it has been a quarter of a century since this Congress passed a balanced budget, 25 years. The Members of this institution have proven incapable of making the tough decisions necessary to balance the budget.

An amendment to the Constitution will force this House to make those difficult decisions. I believe that we can all agree that we must discontinue piling up the debt on our children and grandchildren. For those who disagree with this proposition, I would say state their reasoning clearly. If they are against balancing the budget, come out and say so. Do not hide behind misleading information and untruths.

Mr. Speaker, I employ my colleagues, if they are sincere in their desire to balance the budget, then they must vote for an amendment to the Constitution.

□ 1430

## SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. UPTON). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

### THE AMERICAN PEOPLE NEED MORE INFORMATION ON SPENDING CUTS TO ACHIEVE A BALANCED BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE. Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that we have come just 4 days from leaving our constituents, and possibly we have forgotten that we represent them. It is of great importance that we seek to get their input and understanding of the direction in which this great body would go.

I have been challenged by my constituents of the 18th Congressional District to give them responsible representation. I was further charged by Dr. R.L. Lister, president of the Southwest Region Conference, during a ceremony given by my constituents where I was sworn in to not stray far away from my conscience.

Interestingly enough, it seems that some Members have forgotten that it is important to dialog and to understand and to convey to constituents just what you are doing here. I remember as a former member of the Houston City Council we played an integral role in decisionmaking revolving around the budget for the Nation's fourth largest city.

What we did was consult with constituents, we dialoged with staff mem-

bers, we knew what our outlays were, we knew what our receipts were. We sat around the council table and debated the budget, and we did not operate in a veil of ignorance.

It is important, as I acknowledge the Constitution of the United States, that "We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity"—that we in fact acknowledge that the people of the United States are in fact who we represent in this body.

How, again, can we operate in total ignorance and total unknowing of what we will be doing with a balanced budget amendment? How can we, when the gentleman from the State of Texas, Congressman STENHOLM, offers in good faith the opportunity for this Congress to support a resolution as they proceed to possibly vote for a balanced budget amendment, to simply lay out for the people of the United States what are you planning to cut to balance the budget.

Is that not reasonable, so that the people of the United States can know what we are doing here in this great body? But yet in the Committee on the Budget he was rejected. How can you make determinations on the backs of the American people without letting them know what do you plan to cut if you have a balanced budget amendment?

Then, too, I raise the concern about defense. Oh, yes, there is section 4 that allows this body to waive the balanced budget amendment in times of war or imminent danger. Who knows what that is? Dr. Schlesinger noted in the 1930's we were able to build ships to be prepared for the war in 1940. Did the American people believe they were in danger in the 1930's? What constitutes imminent danger?

Many people in this country agreed with the Rwanda and Somalia humanitarian efforts. Many people want more to be done in Bosnia. Those are not declarations of war. If dollars are needed to be able to fund those worthy causes because the people of the United States want to provide for safety in this world, are we suggesting that we do not have the dollars because of a balanced budget amendment?

Then I listened this morning to former Attorney General William Barr, who said that most people would not have standing to challenge this constitutional amendment. I would venture to say to you that none of us know who has standing in the courts of the United States of America. The judges determine who has standing.

Many people will be harmed by this particular balanced budget amendment. I would argue that they could go into the courts of the United States of America and judges would give them standing.

We are operating under a great burden, the burden to represent the people of the United States of America. I am concerned with the many senior citizens and citizens in nursing homes across this country, some comatose, some dependent upon Medicaid and Medicare, who do not have the opportunity to be represented by speaking up against a budget that may ultimately go against them.

So I think it is very important that as we look to the decisions that have to be made, oh, a balanced budget amendment sounds very attractive, and yes, goes with the political winds, but simply presenting to the American people a balanced budget amendment without information, without the direction, without the ability to have reasonable debate over what will be the cuts that we have to face over the 7-year period and ultimately in the year 2002, I think that speaks against the true tenets of democracy.

I do not think that was the message of November 8, 1994, and I do not think it will be the message of January 19, 1995. I ask for an open and fair debate on this question. Speak up, Republicans, and tell us what you are planning on cutting, because I will be challenged by the district, the 18th Congressional District, for responsible representation, and clearly, I am not going to stray away from my conscience. I must represent the people of the State of Texas and this district with fairness and openness, so that they can make the right decisions as they send their Congressperson, to the U.S. Congress to represent them, and to make the best decisions.

### RUSSIAN ACTIONS IN CHECHNYA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. SMITH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, though the Congress is naturally focused and preoccupied with the historic process of reform, we should not ignore what is going on in the world. As you all know, President Yeltsin has sent the Russian Army to subdue the self-proclaimed Chechen Republic, which declared independence in 1991 under the leadership of former Soviet Air Force Gen. Djokar Dudaev.

Last Thursday, I had a meeting with Dr. Elena Bonner, widow of Andrei Sakharov and president of the Sakharov Foundation. She recently resigned from President Yeltsin's Human Rights Commission to protest the military campaign in Chechnya, which she has described as a step on the road back to totalitarianism. Dr. Bonner urged the U.S. Congress to do whatever it can to help resolve the Chechen crisis peacefully.

Mr. Speaker, Chechnya's desire for independence from Russia raises questions that are indeed difficult and troubling. The international community